

Expert Selected for South Side Economic Redevelopment Strategy Effort

Continuing the commitment to jump-start redevelopment in the city's South Side, Columbus City Councilmembers Mary Jo Hudson and Patsy Thomas, along with the City Development Department, tonight will introduce a team of local researchers and consultants picked to guide the **South Side Targeted Investment Strategy**, a community-driven project to spur growth through smart private and public investments.

Columbus-based Burns, Bertsch & Harris, Inc., selected by a committee of South Side community leaders and City economic development experts, will begin immediately gathering neighborhood input, measuring market viability, and gauging investment potential in the corridor surrounding South Parsons Avenue. The report is due back to the City and the neighborhood by March 2006.

"We need to know both the economic assets and the economic realities of the South Side today, in order to realize the strong development potential of tomorrow," said Hudson, chair of Council's Jobs and Economic Development Committee. "But this cannot be the City acting alone. We want an action plan that links the South Side to real opportunities for growth and prosperity."

"The true strength of this endeavor will be the commitment and collaboration of all those who live, work, and invest in the South Side," said Councilmember Thomas, who was born and raised in the neighborhood. "This isn't about one strip of land or one building project. Everyone is being brought to the table to continue making the South Side a great place to call home."

"Successful urban redevelopment is a team effort, and we are moving forward with our plan to bring new life and energy to the South Side," said Mayor Michael B. Coleman. "The South Side is such a vital part of our community and this effort will mean more jobs for the neighborhood, as well as new investments in homes and shops, especially along Parsons Avenue."

The strategy marks the first use of the Jobs Growth Fund set aside by City Council in its 2005 budget. Additional community input, along with updates on the progress of the strategy, will be tracked on an upcoming website: www.parsonsvisionplan.com.